Chan/Zen Buddhism, Draft Course Outline, Spring 2020

This draft copy of the course outline is subject to revision prior to or at the beginning of the spring 2020 semester.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2020 Spring Term
Class Location: Esther Lee Building (ELB), Room 401

Course Code
BUDS 5002

Course Title
Chan/Zen Buddhism 禪宗的思想與發展

Course Description

A special transmission outside the scriptures 教外別傳
Not established upon words and letters 不立文字
Directly pointing to the human mind 直指人心
Seeing the nature and becoming a Buddha 見性成佛
(a self-characterization of Chan from the Song dynasty)

Chan, popularly known in the West as “Zen” from its Japanese pronunciation, began to take shape as a distinctive form of Buddhism in seventh-century China. It claims to be a unique and separate tradition initiated by the Buddha for the spiritual elite, whose adherents had transcended the teachings of Buddhism contained in conventional scriptures and commentaries. And yet Chan was eventually to produce more literature than any other school of East Asian Buddhism, some of which we will read during this semester. Within several centuries, Chan became the institutionally dominant tradition of Buddhism in China, and it spread to Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. Over the past century Chan, mainly in its Japanese form Zen, it has also grown in the West, capturing the attention of artists, musicians, scholars, psychologists, Catholic priests, and millions of others.

This course surveys the history of Chan teachings and practices. This focus is on Chan during its foundational period in China, i.e., from roughly the seventh through the thirteenth centuries. Later forms of Chan, both in China and abroad, are arguably variations of the kind of Chan that had taken shape in China by the thirteenth century. The course includes three parts: (1) a general introduction to Buddhism and Chan, (2) a survey of Chan’s historical evolution in China through the thirteenth century, and (3) an examination of more recent developments in Chan/Zen.

本課程介紹佛教禪宗的歷史與思想演變。課程的核心內容在於唐代與宋代的中國禪宗。

Course Syllabus

I. Introduction
1. Course Introduction
2. Basic Buddhism
3. Introduction to Chan

II. Chan’s Historical Evolution
   1. The Lineage Model
   2. Early Chan and Bodhidharma
   3. Metropolitan Chan and Huineng
   4. The Platform Sutra
   5. Classical Chan and Linji
   6. Chan Institutional Takeover during the Song
   7. Chan Teachings and Practices in the Song and Beyond

III. Additional Themes
   1. To be decided, with consideration of student interests
   2. The Zen of Silicon Valley
   3. Student reports

Learning Outcomes
1) Knowledge
   To enable students to obtain a broad knowledge of Buddhist Studies as a discipline and a more specialized knowledge in a particular sub-field of concentration, in this case Chan Buddhism.
2) Skills
   To help the students develop research skills in Buddhist Studies, including their competence in academic writing and presentation in order to prepare them for further academic research in Buddhist Studies.
3) Attitude
   To develop a reflective, and empathetic yet critical, attitude in understanding Buddhism.

Assessment Scheme
   1. Participation: 20%
   2. Two oral presentations: 10% (5% each)
   3. Examination: 20%
   4. Final paper: 50%

Course Requirements
Students will be required to complete the following:
1) Regular reading and discussion. Complete the required readings, and participate in class discussion each week. A note on attendance: you will not gain any points simply for attending class. You are expected to attend each class. But you will lose five points
from your final grade for each unexcused absence beyond three. Excused absences include documented medical emergencies, attending a funeral, etc.

2) In-class presentations. Each student will make two presentations. One is to analyze and briefly critique a class reading, and to raise class discussion questions. The second presentation, in the final week, will be related to the student’s term paper. More details (i.e., length of presentation, etc.) will be given during class.

3) Examination: A mid-term evaluation will be conducted during week 9.

4) Term paper. Each student will submit a term paper (roughly 4000 words). Term paper topics should be related to Chan/Zen Buddhism. Term papers can be one of two types: (1) a critical, analytic essay probing an important research question in academic literature on Chan, or (2) research-oriented (i.e., based on original research, such as reading primary texts, conducting interviews, etc.). More instruction and guidelines on the term paper will be given during class.

A Note on Language
The primary medium of instruction for this course will be English. Most required readings, particularly those which require a written response from students, are also in English. However, Mandarin Chinese will be a secondary class language. Some readings, particularly primary source materials, will be in Chinese. Some class discussion may be conducted in Mandarin, especially if initiated by students. In addition, course assignments, including the final paper, may also be written in standard, modern, Mandarin Chinese.

Feedback for Evaluation
An end-of-term university course evaluation will be conducted in class. Student comments and feedback on the course through e-mails or personal meeting with the instructor are always welcome.

Required Readings and Purchases
Most of the required readings will be provided as pdf documents or are accessible online. Some of the recommended readings will also be provided, too. In addition, students should purchase the following book.


Please arrange to acquire this book by week three. A limited number of copies may be available from the CUHK bookstore (location: 1/F, Yau-sunmo International Academic Park).
Class Schedule

Week 1 (Jan. 8): Introduction: Buddha, Buddhism, and Chan/Zen
No required reading.

Recommended readings
- Watch a video describing the Buddha’s life: *The Buddha* (PBS): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wI2Z97fX74s

Week 2 (Jan. 15): Basic Buddhist Teachings
- *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta: Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion* (the first sutta ever delivered, according to Theravada Buddhism): http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn56/sn56.011.than.html
- Selections from the *Shorter ChineseSamyukta Ágama*. Read the introduction to this collection here: http://buddhistinformatics.chibs.edu.tw/BZA/. Then read the English translations of the following sutras: bza001, bza002, bza003, bza004, and bza005, available here: http://buddhistinformatics.chibs.edu.tw/BZA/bzaComCatWeb.html
  Feel free to also read through the ancient Chinese versions of these scriptures, which are provided along with the English (and Pali) versions.

Recommended readings
- In the *Shorter Chinese Samyukta Ágama*, also read through the following sutras: bza006, bza009, bza012, bza013, bza015, bza016, bza021, bza024, bza040, and bza041.

Week 3 (Jan. 22): Introduction to Chan: Broader Contexts and Traditional Accounts
<Re-evaluate class content if many students will be away, given that Chinese New Year’s Eve is on Friday.>

Recommended readings
- *Jingde chuandeng lu 景德傳登録* (T. 2076), selections.
January 29: No class. Happy Chinese New Year!

Week 4 (Feb. 5): Chan and the Lineage Model
- Xu gaoseng zhuan 絭高僧傳 (T. 2060), selections (on meditation/chan masters).

Recommended readings
- McRae and Guan Zefu, 審視傳承——陳述禪宗的另一種方式.

Week 5 (Feb. 12): Early Chan and Bodhidharma

Recommended reading

Week 6 (Feb. 19): Metropolitan Chan and Huineng

Recommended readings


Week 7 (Feb. 26): The Platform Sutra
• Selections, Linzhu dashi fabao tanjing 六祖大师法宝坛经 (T. 2008). The received edition of the Platform Sutra. Comparisons will be made with the Dunhuang version.

Recommended readings


Week 8 (March 4): Classical (Crazy?) Chan and Linji

• Zhenzhou linji huizhao chanshi yulu 鎮州臨濟慧照禪師語錄 (T. 1985), selections.

• Watch the following video, The Zen of the Simpsons: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUzbmIKVAHo

Recommended readings


• Broughton, Jeffrey L. 2009. Zongmi on Chan. New York: Columbia University. (Introduces an important tradition in Chinese Chan, in which Chan realizations are claimed to be congruent with mainstream, Mahayana Buddhist scriptural teachings. In contrast, our class readings on Linji focus on a tradition which is often taken to argue for a sharper divergence between Chan and scriptural teachings.)

Week 9 (March 11): Examination and Discussion of Final Papers
No required reading.
**Week 10 (March 18): Chan Institutional Takeover during the Song Dynasty**

- *Foguo yuanwu chanshi biyan lu* 佛果圜悟禪師碧巖錄 (T. 2003), selection.

**Recommended readings**


**Week 11 (March 25): Chan Teachings and Practices in the Song Dynasty and Beyond**

- *Hongzhi chanshi guanglu* 宏智禪師廣錄 (T. 2001), selection.
- *Dahui pujue chanshi yulu* 大慧普覺禪師語錄 (T. 1998A), selection.

**Recommended readings**


**Week 12 (April 1): To be decided**

**Week 13 (April 8): The Zen of Silicon Valley**

**Week 14 (April 15): Student Reports on Final Papers**
No required readings.

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**Contact Details of Teacher**

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<tr>
<th>Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:</th>
<th>Professor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
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**Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/).

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed *declaration* that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For group projects, all students of the same group should be asked to sign the declaration.

For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students’ uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

**Grade Descriptor**

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.</td>
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